Citizens Project

File: letter to editor

TO THE EDITOR:

The letter of January 9 ("Dump Moral Relativism") by David Noebel, President of Summit Ministries, conveys the argument that equates moral absolutes with conservative Christianity and implies that those who do not share this faith have no moral compass. Further, this argument contends that "tolerance" of others is somehow anti-Christian. It is not surprising that this comes from Summit Ministries, which states in their Understanding the Times curriculum that "students should understand the 'rules of the game'; namely, that this curriculum assumes Biblical Christianity to be true, and other worldviews to be threats to the ultimate welfare of mankind...".

As a community, we have the opportunity to take a more inclusive look at the issue of morality. When labels are dropped and finger pointing stops, we believe that the issue of moral absolutes vs. relativism is a false one: we may differ on the source of moral authority, but we generally act from a shared moral base. How often we hear of the need to reinforce "Christian values," and when outlined, find those values to be the shared values of compassion, honesty, courage, integrity, responsibility and so forth. These certainly are Christian values, but they are not unique to Christianity.

There is a shared moral base that we need to reinforce in our own behavior and teach to our children. We call upon Dr. Noebel and others who may be using faith to exclude rather than to illuminate, to recognize that these same moral values may be conveyed through different moral and ethical systems -- that all others are not by definition threats, amoral, or anti-Christian.

Dr. Noebel asks that public schools "admit their effort to subvert the morals of their students is failing...". Why would public schools wish to subvert morals? This is an unnecessary insult to our hard-working teachers who struggle daily to reinforce the core values named above.

We would all do well to recognize those values we share and seek ways to promote them within our community. We may even come to include respect, understanding and inclusion among the values we cherish.

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Board Chair

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